

The Sun

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 1890.

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Real Reform.

The reforms already introduced by Gen. McKim in the administration of the Sheriff's office have so far transformed that ancient establishment as to encourage the belief that the Legislature will still further advance its renovation by the adoption of a law prescribing hereafter a modern standard of adequate and proper fees. The proposed new law is designed to make the Sheriff's office self-sustaining. It alters by increasing the venerable scale of charges which was fixed upon when groats and guineas constituted the standard of cash payments, and proposes to put the Sheriff, under sheriff, and deputies upon regular salaries upon the basis of \$25,000 a year for the Sheriff, \$5,000 for the under sheriff, and \$3,000 for each deputy employed. If these results shall be attained before the Legislature adjourns, the Black episode will not have been, in the public interest, without its beneficial features, and Governor Hill's admirable selection of a Sheriff for this county will still further justify.

But there is no good reason why the work so vigorously prosecuted should be permitted to stop there. Much has been done, but much remains to do. The full knowledge of the circumstances should not obscure the important and impressive fact that the Chamberlain's office, for instance, should be abolished. It is unnecessary and superfluous. It involves a large expenditure which could be better employed for schools, for street cleaning, for additional accommodations for the afflicted and infirm, for the court room, for fire engines, for docks, or for the Health Department. How, then, can the retention be excused in the public interest, or justified upon any ground of political expediency? The abolition of superfluous offices not necessary to the administration of the people's affairs, is as much a principle of Democracy as is rotation in office itself. No public requirement demands the retention of a Chamberlain as a pensionary upon the treasury which he does not protect. The abuse of power involved in keeping him should be swept away with the abuses in the Sheriff's office.

The Presbyterian Agitation.

On Monday the Presbytery of this city appointed delegates to the General Assembly, all of whom are in favor of revising the Westminster Confession. But, according to the present indications, it is very doubtful whether they will be on the winning side.

The whole number of presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church is 211, of which only about one-third had voted on the question up to last accounts. In order to effect a proposal changes, a two-thirds vote is required of those articles of faith which are to be retained affirmatively; and of those voting so far, the opposition amounts to something more than one-third. Of the chief cities, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Chicago, New York, and Washington are for revision, but Kansas City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco are against it. The influence of the largest and most powerful presbyteries is therefore pretty squarely divided; and among the presbyteries yet to be heard from are many of the most conservative.

The outlook accordingly does not now seem to be favorable for the destruction of the ancient standards of faith when the General Assembly meets at Saratoga on the 15th of next month. Yet it grows apparent that the majority of Presbyterians no longer accept them. They cannot stand the doctrine of election and its consequences. But suppose that the two-thirds required to get rid of these articles of faith should not be obtainable, what are they going to do about it?

Perhaps when it is all over and they are fairly beaten, they will proceed to revise their own opinions; and they may well do so, if they are not prepared to give up their whole system of theology. The presbyteries voting against the proposed changes have impregnable logic on their side, unless their opponents go to the extreme of the Albany Presbytery and demand the construction of an entirely new creed; and it must be a radically different creed.

Among the delegates in favor of revision appointed by the New York Presbytery on Monday is Mr. HENRY DAY. He is an elder of the Church, a Presbyterian in the wool, an acute lawyer in worldly affairs, studious, and well informed. Yet, under the Westminster Confession was first introduced criticism. Mr. DAY expressed himself as astonished to learn that he had been proposed to believe in its fundamental teachings. The doctrine of election was abhorrent to him, and he probably represented the feeling of the great majority of Presbyterian laymen in New York. But let him read his book of faith carefully, as he would read a legal document upon which he was to give an opinion, and see how essential to its logical consistency the theory of election is. He will find that election and its declared consequences lie at the very foundation, are the premises and the conclusions from premises necessary to the support of his entire system of theology. If he believes in the personality of God and in future retribution, he must believe in them. There is no escape for short of infidel orthodoxy that it has to do with the phases of the moon. The Australian ballot hurt the Democrats at the first elections, and there is no evidence that it has helped them in the by-elections. The feeling that the Democrats ought, in justice, to have the State officers, since there was a plurality of Democratic votes, undoubtedly made many Republicans vote the Democratic ticket at the elections held last Saturday. The existence of this feeling is acknowledged even by our solemn old Mugwump friend, the *Providence Journal*.

We earnestly hope that Rhode Island may be counted upon to vote the Democratic ticket at State and national elections in the future; but we do not yet share the confidence which is expressed by some of our esteemed contemporaries. The State was progressing toward Democracy by the enlargement of the franchise. The adoption of the Australian system of voting is a new restriction upon the suffrage whose effect cannot be injurious to the Democrats. We do not believe that the Republicans feel much apprehension about the result.

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In his own sphere of activity Judge MURRAY is a local Democratic leader who adds a pleasing manner to a martial aspect. The charges attributed to him are, most of them, of a frivolous and unimportant kind. He denies, indeed, having made them, and whether made or not, they could not slightly affect the sentiment of Democratic voters in this city who are interested in contemporary and not in ante-bellum occurrences. But their examination will at least keep the members of the committee engaged, and will cause the time to pass rapidly for them, even though their conclusions should affect neither of the contestants injuriously. It might also be well if the zeal of the committee should be stimulated by the feeling of pleasure to the mourning heart of a widow, depends probably on circumstances and her temperament. Some people rebound sooner than others. In one case the man capable of restoring elasticity to the unstrung heart may be close at hand, and in another he may be long in coming. Mere concern for conventionality may lead one widow to stifle any new affection so soon as it has birth, while another will tend and cultivate it, however great may be her self-accusation. The feeling of the duty of grief for the dead may be more irrefragable in one than another, and yet the reality of the mourning in each may be the same.

Therefore we say to the inquiring widow of New Jersey, consult your own heart. You would not write to us otherwise. The affection which you have awakened brings joy to your mind, despite its misgivings, and your misgivings do not destroy the memory of the dead as you fear that you will overstep propriety if you do not entertain them.

As for the man who would woo you, who seems already to have wooed you to good purpose, we applaud his spirit and admire his method, so bold, so frank, and so straightforward. He has not beaten about the bush with hints, signs, ambiguous glances, and timid forebodings, but has advanced directly and courageously to the attack. He is in love with you, wants to marry you, and he has told you so in plain words.

Is that to "display a lack of courtesy and good manners"? It is to show the highest courtesy and good manners. If he has come too early, if your heart is still in the grave, you have only to tell him so squarely as he has told you of his living affection. But manifestly he has not come too soon, and no honest you by his profile.

May the sun shine gloriously in New Jersey on the wedding day, and may joy attend your new venture into matrimony.

The news comes from Sydney that a vessel recently run aground at Mallico, the second largest island in the New Hebrides group, and that thirty men who struggled ashore upon the wreck, were massacred and eaten by the natives. This island is situated about 1,200 square miles, was only two or three years ago occupied by a French garrison, whose purpose was to protect traders from the hostility of the natives. But these savage Papuans cannot forget their old wrongs, and they have improved the first opportunity to wipe vengeance upon helpless sailors who were cast upon their shores.

Mr. KNUX-SCHOLLS and other travelers among these islands have testified that the natives of the New Hebrides are friendly and hospitable when well treated. But these savages have suffered outrageously from the crimes of labor-recruiting ships, by which, in the days before the great evil was suppressed with a stern hand, they were torn from their homes by hundreds to toil as slaves on the plantations of other islands or in Queensland. It is only a few years since the Captain of the schooner Venus landed on the very island where the recent tragedy occurred, and noticed native natives to the hold of his vessel on the pretense that he wished them to move an iron tank. When he got them below the hatches were simply clapped on them, and

demise which is expressed by some of our esteemed contemporaries. The State was progressing toward Democracy by the enlargement of the franchise. The adoption of the Australian system of voting is a new restriction upon the suffrage whose effect cannot be injurious to the Democrats. We do not believe that the Republicans feel much apprehension about the result.

There were many special contemporary causes which worked against the Republicans this year, and helped the Democrats. The Republican party was split up in a number of towns by quarrels about the Federal patronage, revivals of old local quarrels, quarrels about the location of voting precincts, and so on. The Republican party has always had plenty of funds. This year the funds were not raised. According to the Boston Herald, the Republican manufacturers did not contribute, and Gov. LADD had to put his hand deep into his pocket. "He would have been elected," says the Mugwump observer, "if his own party had been united and had stood by his ticket." And "the party failed to grasp the situation."

The quarrels in the Republican party, its inactive policy, and its want of campaign funds served to offset the losses caused by the workings of the Australian ballot system. It was not Democratic strength alone, but also Republican weakness, that gave the election to the Democrats. The State would be safely Democratic were it not for the ballot law. With the ballot law, the Democrats are far from being sure of success.

Doubtful Investigation.
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